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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

15 February 1952

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

[REDACTED]  
Colonel B. B. Talley, G-2  
Captain Ray Malpass, ONI  
Colonel Edward H. Porter, AFON  
Colonel S. M. Lansing, JIG

SUBJECT : Meeting of the IAC Representatives on Intelligence Gaps on 13 February

The minutes of subject meeting are attached for your information.

[REDACTED]  
WILLIAM P. BUNDY  
Acting Executive Secretary

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MEETING ON INTELLIGENCE GAPS

HELD IN O/NE


Wednesday, 13 February 1952

Present:

CIA:

Mr. Kent, AD/NE, Chairman

Mr. Reber, AD/IC

 O/SI  
O/CI  
O/PC  
O/SO

Mr. Cooper, O/NE

Mr. Bundy, O/NE

Agency Representatives:

STATE: Mr. Yeager  
Mr. Vazquez

G-2: Col. Bethune  
Mr. Tod

ONI: Lt. Cdr. Harrington  
Cdr. Borel  
Cdr. Jones

AFOIN: Col. Pinkney  
Col. Gillis  
Col. Hussey  
Maj. Green

JIG: Col. Kilborn  
Capt. Lugibihl

MR. KENT spoke on the purpose of the meeting, to evolve a procedure for post-mortems for estimates so as to sharpen directives for research and collection activities. He proposed the following procedures:

1. A meeting after the publication of an estimate, between the O/NE staff and the working groups and/or the estimates staffs of the IAC or other participating agencies, to explore the gaps revealed in the estimate.

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2. O/NE to draft a summary of the intelligence gaps to be cleared by the Board of National Estimates.
3. Presentation of this "gap summary" to the IAC for its official notice.

MR. YEAGER, for State, approved the idea of a post-mortem, but urged strongly that prospective gaps should be disclosed and considered at the meeting on terms of reference. He also suggested that terms of reference be sent to the field wherever possible. In connection with the proposed procedure he raised the question whether the IAC agencies should review the summary prepared by O/NE. MR. KENT replied that the agencies should participate if they desired.

COL. BETHUNE, for G-2, pointed out that post-mortem meetings would impose a considerable burden on agency staffs. He thought that any meetings must certainly be narrowed to essentials, though it was a good idea to look at the intelligence gaps. He also remarked that agency contributions were not always used fully or properly in the preparation of estimates.

25X1 [ ] for O/SI, favored the idea of post-mortems but urged a procedure that would "dig deep" on occasional estimates in critical areas such as Korea. He thought that a superficial look in a routine manner would do some good, but the improvement would be slight compared with the effect of a real operations research job on a limited number of crucial estimates. MR. KENT commented that the Board's proposed procedure was meant to apply to all estimates.

LT. CDR. HARRINGTON, for ONI, stressed the personnel problems of ONI in serving the CNO and JCS as well as estimate needs. He joined with Col. Bethune in urging that there be a greater time for the agencies to study terms of reference, so that gaps could be brought out and discussed fully at the terms of reference meetings.

COL. PINKNEY, for the Air Force, said he would be inclined to go along on the idea of post-mortems but thought that careful "pre-mortems" (i.e., at the terms of reference stage) would help cut down or eliminate the need for post-mortems.

LT. CDR. HARRINGTON supported the suggestion for more time before the meeting on terms of reference by giving a picture of

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ONI's procedure. When ONI receives terms of reference, these must be checked against several contributing sections (for example, NIE-27/1 drew on five sections of ONI). These sections have to comment on the terms of reference and the estimates staff has to coordinate these comments.

MR. REBER suggested that, in lieu of a formal meeting, O/NE might prepare a draft stating what it believed to be the gaps and this could be circulated for agency comment. MR. KENT thought that a working group meeting was a vital part of the procedure.

MR. YEAGER, for State, questioned whether every "gap summary" needed to go to the IAC. He also urged that any post-mortem procedure be not too formal.

COL. BETHUNE thought that if the terms of reference were really good they should make the gaps stand out without the need for a post-mortem. He stressed that meetings between the Board and the agency representatives very seldom referred to the contributions or to the underlying facts. However, he said he was not opposed to a post-mortem if it did not lead to too many meetings. He thought that a decision on the procedure should be made formally by the IAC because of the extra burden involved.

MR. REBER opposes the suggestion of any formal plan to be approved by the IAC, on the ground that this would undoubtedly rigidify the procedure. He returned to the idea of keeping the procedure as informal as possible, and probably relying on O/NE to draft "gap summaries" initially. He also urged that O/NE deal on a bilateral basis with contributing agencies wherever possible, with any general meetings limited to gaps of multi-agency interest. MR. YEAGER, for State, specifically concurred in the last suggestion.

MR. REBER also urged that the "gap summary", when completed, should go to OIC/CIA so that OIC might obtain the views of the collecting agencies and also inform the Interdepartmental Priorities Committee (IPC).

COL. BETHUNE said that the feature of the Board's procedure that bothered him most was presentation of the "gap summary" to the IAC. Presentation to the IAC would inevitably lead to burdensome meetings. MR. KENT urged that IAC presentation would give the draft more importance than it could have otherwise. MR. YEAGER thought that IAC presentation should depend on the paper.

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MR. REBER pointed out that in any event a draft submitted to the IAC should include recommendations for action, so that OIC should incorporate the collection angle and also consult the necessary research people before any paper went to the IAC. COLONEL PINKNEY agreed with this suggestion for "complete staff work," and urged that reports to the IAC be made on the basis of a group of post-mortems rather than on the basis of individual post-mortems as standard operating procedure.

#### CONCLUSIONS

At MR. KENT's suggestion it was finally agreed that a post-mortem would be tried on an experimental basis on NIE-35/1, the pending paper on Indochina. Inasmuch as this was the initial effort, a staff meeting with agency representatives would be held. Thereafter, O/NE would draft a "gap summary." Further action, including additional agency representatives meetings or transmission of the summary to Mr. Reber, would be worked out as the situation warranted.

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